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Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

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Senate Intelligence Committee

Hearings on National Intelligence Strategy

Senator Dave Durenberger (R-Minn.), Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said today that had a long range national strategy for intelligence been in place at the proper time, past upheavals in the intelligence community could have been avoided. "If the true objectives of covert action had been thought through and articulated, the misunderstandings that have developed over this activity could have been avoided", Durenberger said.

"Regionally, a long range strategy would have pinpointed the difficulties that we inherited in Central America. The shortfalls that we have experienced in our intelligence abilities in this vital section of the world might not have occurred in the first place or might have been anticipated and planned for," Durenberger continued.

Durenberger also expressed concern that the lack of a long range national strategy could give rise to future difficulties. "Correctly handling the problems of terrorism, narcotics interdiction, and verification of future arms control agreements demands a well thought out, long range strategy if intelligence gaps are to be avoided and policy makers are to have the adequate and timely information their decisions require", Durenberger said.

Durenberger's comment was contained in an opening statement delivered at a meeting of the Intelligence Committee which marked the beginning of a series of hearings by that committee designed to establish a national intelligence strategy.

Durenberger went on to say that he believes the intelligence community itself will be far better able to make its case to a skeptical public and their representatives if it begins to articulate its plans in terms of an overall strategy, explicitly noting the relevance of plans and operations to national policy.

"At a time when the resources we can devote to national security are being increasingly strained, and the potential requirements of policy appear to grow every day, the Congress and the public must have confidence that our overall security policy is based on a sense of priorities envisioned," Durenberger said.

Durenberger said it was not possible to know today what conclusions the committee may reach at the end of these hearings. "We may find that the intelligence community is considering, and considering well, the kinds of questions about future investments that we begin to explore today," Durenberger said.